WINTER 2002

ALABAMA CHESS FEDERATION ANTICS

PRESIDENTS LETTER

By ACF President Bill Melvin

Effective Janurary 1, 2003 the cost of s USCF membership goes up. The cost of a one year adult membership goes from $40 to $49. Fifteen different memberships are available in 2003 including some "economy" ones. Scholastic players have to chose between a $13 Economy Scholastic membership(with an annual Yearbook?), a $25 Scholastic membership (includes 5 issues of Chess Life and a Scholastic Yearbook) or perhaps a $49 adult membership. This is quite a change from a $13 Scholastic membership that included four quality issues of School Mates.

The justification for these rate hikes is that the USCF is losing money. However, I believe this thinking is severely flawed. Raising prices does not always raise revenues. From a business prespective each product/service in this world has an optimal price point. Go below this point and you will sell more product, however; you wont make as much profit per unit. Go above this point to sell for a higher price, but you will be the worse off because you will sell less units.

Now to my way of thinking, two possibilities exist:

1. The USCF price of $40 was underpriced by 25%. As such the vast majority of USCF members will pay (even if they complain) the increased rate. The USCF will have more money to fund its operations.

2 . Or the price of $40 was near optimal. Raising the rate to $49 a year will result in attrition that will actually cost the USCF money.

Of course nobody knows for sure whether 1)or 2) is correct. Time will tell. We will know by Janurary of 2004. For the sake of our national organization, I hope the slate of price increases works out for the USCF.

Hope everyone enjoys this issue of ANTICS and starts off 2003 with many daring checkmates!

Editors Notes-------

Welcome to the Winter issue of ANTICS. I hope everyone is enjoying the blessings of this season and are looking foward to the new year in chess. We are starting this year off right, with two two day tournaments! The first is the Richard Bellezza Memorial Class championships Janruary 18-19,2003. The second is the 31st Annual Queen of Hearts. Both promise to be good tournaments and we trust well supported by the Alabama chess player. Of course we would love to announce the Space City Open (hint Huntsville) or maybe a Tuscaloosa two day but we havent got any commitment from those two fine cities yet!

The postal championship failed to garner any entries. Well so much for that idea. Any interest out there for an email championship? Lets see--

2003 Email championship Begining date Feb 1, 2003 closing dates for entries Jan 25.Ef $ 10 prizes and format will be determined by entries. Time 10/30 TD Kirk Petty Need an assistant as I intend to play. Rules will be standard and sent with assignment. Open only to ACF members,title to top scoring Alabama resident.

We need more tournaments!!!! I implore, beg and humbly request all organizers to step fopward and organize something!!!!! From March on there is nothing scheduled that I am aware of. I would like to see someone organize a bid for the State Championship, or take on the Space City or Vulcan. Below is my tournament ad for the Jan 18-19 tournament.

Why a class tournament?

1. Richard was a class individual 2. Everyone is playing for first! 3 great chance to gain rating points.

RICHARD BELLEZZA MEMORIAL CLASS CHAMPIONSHIPS Jan 18 - 19, 2003

4ss Rd 1 g/90 Rds 2-4 g/2 In 7 Sections

UAB Education Bldg 901 13th Street South Birmingham Al

EF $30 Adv by 1/11 $40 at site

$$$$ Each section is based on 10 in that section

Master/Expert 170 - 75
Class A 160-75
Class B 160 - 75
Class C 150- 75
Class D 150 - 75
Class E/Below 150-75 UNR b/6 100 -40

Trophies to first each class Must have 6 in class or will combine
and adjust prizes according to class partcipation

Registration 9-9:45 am sharp Rds 10 - 2 8:30 - 1:30

Ent: Kirk Petty
Special Alabama G/5 Championship 1/18 6:15pm EF $10 Bughouse Tourney 7:45 EF $10team

1st Annual Dothan Open

On December 14th, 2002 the city of Dothan witnessed a novel sight. A rated, one-day chess tournament at the Dakota Coffee works. What follows is the tournament report from Tim Owens director and organizer. A few words first-- This is what we need to revitalize Chess in Alabama. Organizers and directors in different cities, from different clubs each directing one or two tournaments a year. The officers of the ACF and fellow organizers thank you for your efforts. --Editor

The Dothan Open- by Tim Owens

The first major tournament in any new area can bring suprises. In our case the suprises were all good. We recieved support from Tallahassee, PanamaCity, Columbus and Montgomery; however, the biggest suprise was the influx of scholastic players. This support is a good indication that Dothan is a good location to attract players from a large radius and that chess has a great potential here for a long time. The facilities were very good with the top nine boards in a semi-secluded room. Sigurd Smith came up from Talahassee as our chess vendor. Sig was really able to open the eyes of many of the scholastic players to the abundance of chess literture and equipment available.

30 players attended with 16 unrated, (12 of them scholastic). There was a three way tie for first place between our own Tim Bond (Dothan),Chris Bond (Montgomery) and Mark Liatti(Columbus). Alma VanDiver(Dothan) and William McTigue (Talahassee) split the U1600 prize. Bill Vanness and Tim Owens (both of Dothan) split the U1400 prize. For the Under 1200/unr,Jerome Howell (Dothan)

took first, Jason Bowman (Panama city) took second. Since there were so many scholastic players, more prizes were added awarding three places> Mark Ketron took 1st Maththew Daniels and Perry Andrews tied for second (all from Rehobeth school)

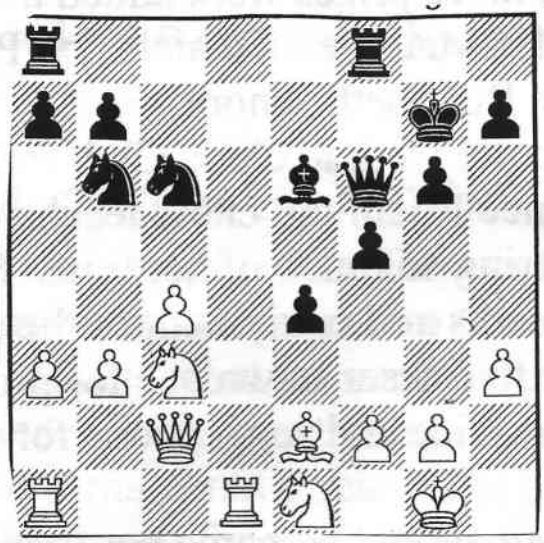
Special thanks goes out to all in the Dothan chess Club for helping out wherever needed. Renee Roebling, chess teacher with the Rehobeth School,for volunteering so much of her time. Sig Smith for bringing a wide selection of books and equipment to the attention of young and old alike. Of course to Caeser Lawrence for providing so much behind the scenes help, advice and suggestions for the evolving tournament director.

A crosstable follows as well as an annotated game between two players who didn't recieve any prize, but played excellent, fighting chess the entire tournament, Zachary Kinney (Montgomery) and our own Ronnie Berglund.

1st Annual Dothan Open

#	Name	Rtg	Rd1	Rd2	Rd3	Rd4	Total
1	M. Liatti	1923	W22	W5	W10	D2	3.5
2	T Bond	1912	W25	W14	W6	D1	3.5
3	C Bond	1967	W24	W6	D4	W7	3.5
4	Z Kinney	1837	W15	W13	D3	D10	3.0
5	B Zanness	1321	W17	L1	W16	W12	3.0
6	T Owens	1342	W26	L3	W25	W13	3.0
7	W McTigue	1489	W16	W21	W11	L3	3.0
8	A Vandiver	1496	W18	W20	L2	W14	3.0
9	J Howell	unr	L12	W23	W22	W20	3.0
10	M Peach	1806	W23	W12	L1	D4	2.5
11	J Bowman	1116	D27	W29	L7	W21	2.5
12	R Tew	1130	W9	L10	W19	L5	2.0
13	T Waldron	1139	W19	L4	W17	L6	2.0
14	E Whayne	1304	W30	l2	W26	L8	2.0
15	R Berglund	unr	L4	L17	W30	W26	2.0
16	M Keton	unr	L7	W28	L5	W22	2.0
17	A Kelley	unr	L5	W15	L13	W25	2.0
18	E Patterson	unr	L8	L19	W29	W24	2.0
19	M Pollard	unr	L13	W18	L12	W23	2.0
20	M Daniels	unr	W28	L8	D21	L9	1.5
21	P Andrews	unr	W29	L7	D20	L11	1.5
22	M Roebling	unr	L1	W27	L9	L16	1.0
23	N Pogue	unr	L10	L9	W28	L19	1.0
24	S Maddox	unr	L3	L26	W27	L18	1.0
25	T Pruitt	unr	L2	W30	L6	L17	1.0
26	K Williams	unr	L6	W24	L14	L15	1.0
27	C Watson	unr	D11	L22	L24	D29	1.0
28	C Hughes	unr	L20	L16	L23	W30	1.0
29	A Long	unr	L21	L11	L18	D27	0.5
30	E Pruitt	unr	L14	L25	L15	L28	0.0

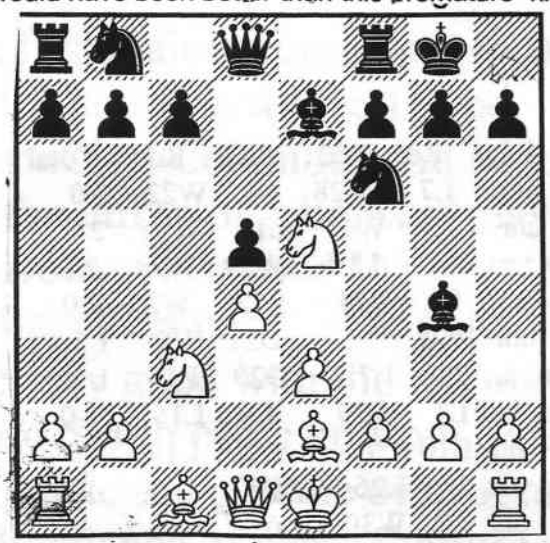
Rd3 Dothan open White Peach Black Liatti
1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.Nf3 Nxd5 4.d4 g6 5.c4 Nb6 6.h3 Bg7 7.Be3 c5 8.Nc3 cxd4 9.Bxd4 0–0 10.Bxg7 Kxg7 11.Be2 Nc6 12.0–0 e5 13.a3 Be6 14.b3 f5 15.Qc2 e4 16.Rfd1 Qf6 17.Ne1

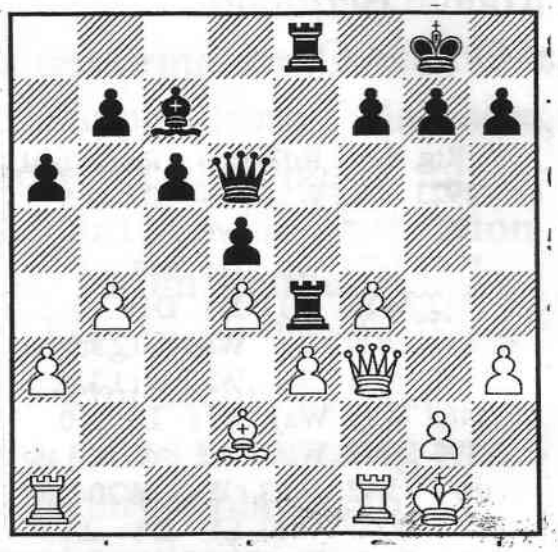


Nd4! 18.Rxd4 Qxd4 19.Na2 Qxa1

Rd1 Dothan Open White R Berglund Black Z Kinney

1.d4 Nf6 2.e3 e6 3.c4 Be7 4.Nc3 0–0 5.Nf3 d5 6.cxd5 exd5 7.Be2 Bg4 8.Ne5 White seems to be in a hurry in this game to trade pieces with his higher rated opponent. Often the stronger player just improves his position through exchanges as is seen in this game O–O would have been better than this premature knight sortie





8...Bxe2 9.Qxe2 c6 10.0–0 Nbd7 11.Nxd7 Qxd7 12.a3 Rfe8 13.h3 Bd6 14.b4 a6 15.Na4 Bc7 16.Nc5 Qd6 17.f4 Rab8 18.Qf3 Ne4 19.Nxe4 Rxe4 20.Bd2 Rbe8 21.Qg3 R8e6 22.Rf3 Rg6 23.Qh4 Bd8 24.Qh5 Rh6 25.Qf5 Qe6 26.Qxe6 Rhxe6 27.Raf1 f5 28.Rb1 Kf7 29.a4 b5 30.axb5 axb5 31.Ra1 Bf6 32.Ra7+ Re7 33.Rxe7+ Rxe7 34.Rf1 Ra7 35.Rc1 Ra6 36.Kf2 Be7 37.Kf3 Ke6 38.g4 h6 39.gxf5+ Kxf5 40.Rg1 Bf6 41.h4 Ra2 42.Bc3 Bxh4 43.Rxg7 Rf2#

Rd4 Dothan Open Here Tim shows he can play as well as direct.
White Tim Owens 1342
Black Thomas Waldron 1139 **1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 Nf6 3.cxd5 Nxd5 4.Nc3 Nc6 5.e3 Nxc3 6.bxc3 Bg4 7.Bb5 Qd5 8.c4 Bxf3 9.cxd5 Bxd1 10.dxc6 bxc6 11.Bxc6+** 1–0

This next report sent in Caesar reminds us othat it is almost time again for the Queen of Hearts, the flyerfor the 2003 also follows. Editor

30TH Annual Queen of Hearts
Chess Tournament * February 16-17, 2002 * Montgomery, AL
By: Caesar Lawrence

The Queen of Hearts tournament has long been a main stay chess event in the state of Alabama. Montgomery gets to play host to all of those love birds/chess enthusiasts around Valentine's Day.

Todd Andrews took the top honors in the Open section with 4.5 points. In the Reserve section, Robert Rieves played the best of the best and ran away with the title. I know in one of those games, Bob snatched victory from the jaws of defeat. Congratulations to the section winners.

The prize winners:

OPEN	RESERVE
1st Todd Andrews	1st Robert Rieves
2nd Gerald Larson	2nd James Bowen
Class A Giles D'Souza	Class D Trae Roush
2nd Class A Keith Jakeman	U1000 Daniel Long
U1800 Scott Helton	2nd U1000 James Jackson
U1800 Tom Lawry	

Congratulations to all of the winners and thanks to all of the players for supporting the Queen of Hearts!
Let's Play Chess...

QUEEN OF HEARTS (QoH) 2002 - OPEN CROSSTABLE

#	PLAYER NAME	ST	PreRate	PstRate	Rd1	Rd2	Rd3	Rd4	Rd5	Total
1	TODD ANDREWS	TN	2277	2280	W-11	W-6	W-2	W-8	D-5	4.5
2	GERALD LARSON	AL	2095	2108	W-12	W-10	L-1	W-4	W-6	4.0
3	GILES D'SOUZA	AL	1900	1915	L-4	W-13	W-14	D-5	W-8	3.5
4	BILL MELVIN	AL	2200	2200	W-3	L-5	W-9	L-2	W-10	3.0
5	KEITH JAKEMAN	AL	1930	1944	W-13	W-4	L-8	D-3	D-1	3.0
6	KIRK PETTY	AL	1909	1906	W-14	L-1	D-10	W-9	L-2	2.5
7	TIM BOND	AL	1898	1884	D-9	L-8	H---	D-10	W-11	2.5
8	THOMAS LAWRY	AL	1768	1798	H---	W-7	W-5	L-1	L-3	2.5
9	SCOTT HELTON	AL	1765	1785	D-7	W-11	L-4	L-6	W-14	2.5
10	GREG WILDER	AL	1618	1635	B---	L-2	D-6	D-7	L-4	2.0
11	KENNETH GOODMAN	AL	1901	1875	L-1	L-9	W-13	D-14	L-7	1.5
12	RHODES PEELE	AL	1800	1778	L-2	L-14	H---	H---	D-13	1.5
13	ROSS SMITH	AL	1723	1705	L-5	L-3	L-11	B---	D-12	1.5
14	STEVEN CULLIFER	FL	0000	1690/05	L-6	W-12	L-3	D-11	L-9	1.5

QUEEN OF HEARTS (QoH) 2002 - RESERVE CROSSTABLE

#	PLAYER NAME	ST	PreRate	PstRate	Rd1	Rd2	Rd3	Rd4	Rd5	Total
1	ROBERT RIEVES	AL	1256	1496	B---	W-4	W-9	W-2	W-3	5.0
2	JAMES BOWEN	AL	1545	1558	W-11	W-5	W-6	L-1	D-4	3.5
3	DANIEL LONG	AL	1259/01	1481/06	L-6	W-7	W-4	W-9	L-1	3.0
4	JASON SELVAGE	AL	1568	1540	W-8	L-1	L-3	W-10	D-2	2.5
5	JULIANO JOAQUIN	AL	1490/16	1462/21	W-10	L-2	L-8	D-7	W-6	2.5
6	KEVIN CRISLER	AL	1420	1430	W-3	W-9	L-2	D-8	L-5	2.5
7	TRAE ROUSH	AL	1333/25	1329	L-9	L-3	W-10	D-5	B---	2.5
8	JIM GRIFFIN	AL	1312	1343	L-4	B---	W-5	D-6	U---	2.5
9	MILES MELVIN	AL	1533	1489	W-7	L-6	L-1	L-3	W-10	2.0
10	JAMES JACKSON	AL	0000	1201/05	L-5	W-11	L-7	L-4	L-9	1.0
11	JAMES BROWN	AL	1464	1421	L-2	L-10	U---	U---	U---	0.0

31st Annual Queen of Hearts tournament

Feb 22-23,2003 Auburn University at Montgomery

On site registration $45 Sat Feb 22nd 8-9AM Preregistration $40 by Feb 16th
Entries to TD Caesar Lawrence
(Include USCF # and section (Open or Reserve) on check memo line
Time Control 35/90 sd/30 Rds 9:30-2:30-7:30 9:00-3:00 USCF & ACF required OSA
ACF BUSINESS MEETING Sunday 1:30-2:30

Contacts Caesar Lawrence
Rhodes Peele
ACF http://www.cis.uab.edu/info/faculty/sloan/ACF/events
Vendor Sig smith. www.sigschess.com

$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$ PRIZES $$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$

PRIZES

OPEN (to all) (Based upon 40 players)

1st $300
2nd $150
Top Expert $100
2nd Expert $50
Top A $100
2nd A $50
Top < 1800 $100
2nd < 1800 $50

RESERVE (under 1600)

1st $230
2nd $120
Top D $100
2nd D $50
Top E $100
Top < 1000/UNR $100

Big Swindles
By Bill Melvin

My greatest strength as a chess player is neither strategy nor tactics. My specialty is making the most of a bad situation. Over the years, I've saved hundreds of technically lost positions by digging hard for resources and never giving up. Below are two examples of mega-swindles that occurred recently in consecutive weekends.

Greater Alabama Open August 11, 2002 Round 5 Board 3
35/90 SD/30 Benoni Defense (E14)
Frisco Del Rosario (2027) Bill Melvin (2208)
1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. e3 b6 4. Nf3 e6 5. Bd3 ...

We're transposing lines all over the place. These variations jump between ECO Volume A and ECO Volume E . After 3. e3 we were in A56 and now we're in E14! Only 5. Nc3 is given in an ECO footnote. White looks to have a normal opening advantage.

5. ... Bb7 6. Nbd2 d5 7. cxd5 exd5 8. b3 Bd6 9. Qe2 O-O 10. Bb2 Nc6 11. a3 Re812. O-O Ne413. Rfd1 f5 14. Qf1 g5?!

Not a sound attack. Lots of fun, though!

15. dxc5 bxc5 16. g3 Re6 17. Rac1 Rh6 18. Qg2 Qe7 19. h4 Nxg3?

Counting on winning a pawn after 20. fxg3 Qxe3 21. Kh2 Qxd3. White plays sharply to refute.

20. Nxg5! Ne5?!

Black can't just play 20. ... Rxh4 since 21. Qxd5+ puts white well on top. Things are getting ugly fast.

21. Bxe5 Bxe5 22. fxg3 d4 23. e4 f4 24. gxf4 Bxf4

The position has been very sharp, but black just doesn't have anything for the sacrificed piece. White seems to be attacking as much as black.

25. Bc4+ Kg7 26. Ne6+ Kh827. Nxf4 Qxh4

White is now up the equivalent of a rook! Most Masters would resign such a position against an Expert. Being two pieces down, surely black's position is hopeless...

28. Rf1 Ba6

Here is a key position. At the time of the game, I was most concerned about 29. Bd5 Bxf1 30. Rxf1 and white's position is clearly overwhelming. Surprisingly, the usually materialistic computer goes for 29. Bd5 right away. My opponent tries to hold on to everything.

29. e5? Re8?

It is amazing how many resources a computer finds. Black misses 29. ... Bb7 30. Bd5 Bxd5 31. Nxd5 Rg8 and everything is unclear again.

30. Bxa6 Rg8

While 30. ... Rxa6 would give black threats, white could meet them by 31. Qh2 and bringing the king to safety on h1. While the position is still winning for white, at least black now has a material imbalance to work against.

31. Qxg8 Kxg8 32. Bc4+ Kh8 33. Ng2 Qh2+

Now the rook and queen work their magic. With the white army disconnected, black is able to slowly improve by making threats that are hard to meet each move. White's position is very hard to play.

34. Kf2 Rg635. Rg1 ...

Better is 35. Bd5 and making an effort to coordinate the pieces.

35. ... Qg3+ 36. Ke2 Qxe5+ 37. Kd3 Qf5+ 38. Ke2 Qh3 39. Kf2 Rf6+

Again, 39. Bd5 was much better.

40. Ke2 Qh5+ 41. Kd3 Qf5+ 42. Ke2 d3+!

Black has the advantage now. White is hard-pressed to find a way to survive.

43. Kd1 Qg4+
44. Nf3 Rxf3
45. resigns
0 - 1

Murfreesboro August 17, 2002 Round 4 Board 3 Game/75 Classical Sicilian (B59)
Shaun W. Whelan (1608) Bill Melvin (2208)
1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 d6 6. Be2 e5 7. Nb3 Be7 8. Be3 Be69. Qd2 d5
10. exd5 Nxd5 11. Nxd5 Qxd5 12. O-O Qxd213. Nxd2 Nb4

Play has been fairly routine up until now. Theory considers black being able to equalize after 6. Be2 and after 9. ... d5 the position is pretty much equal. The computer gives a slight nod to black, but it isn't anything to get excited about. I was hoping my tricky move would be difficult for white to meet. Black is threatening to capture on c2 and guarding with a rook doesn't do anything (14. Rfc1 Nxa2 wins a pawn). Moving the pawn gives black the advantage of pawn structure and the bishop pair after 14. c3 Nc2, 15. Rac1 Nxe3 16. fxe3. White finds a way to solve the problems.

14. Bf3 Nd5

This is a hard position to analyze over the board. The computer says black should accept the challenge and play

14. ... Nxc2 15. Bxb7 Rd8 16. Bc6+ Kf8 17. Rad1 Nxe3 18. fxe3 with black up almost the equivalent of a pawn positionally. I didn't like moving my king to f8 without the win of a pawn and gave up on the line too early.

15. Bxd5 Bxd5 16. f3 b6 17. a4 Rc8 18. Rfc1 Rc7 19. c4 Be6 20. a5 Bc5 21. Kf2 Ke7 22. axb6 axb6

23. b3 Rd8 24. Ke2 Bf5 25. Ra2 Rcd7

Better may be 25. ... Bxe3 26. Kxe3 Rd3+. Black still has an edge. Both sides have played well so far.

26. Bxc5 dxc5 27. Rca1 Rd3 28. Ra7 R8d7

Black has little advantage left, but keeping both pairs of rooks on is the best chance.

29. Rxd7 Rxd7 30. Ra6 Rc7

Not a good move to have to make. Now white has a very small advantage.

31. Nf1 Kd7 32. Ne3 Be6 33. Kd3 f6 34. Nd5 Rb7 35. Kc3 Bf7

Incredibly, this safe looking move is bad and black has a losing position. From e6 the bishop was able to watch over c8 and d7. Now the knight infiltrates decisively.

36. Nb6! Ke7 37. Nc8! Kf8 38. Rc6 Bg6 39. Rxc5 Rd7 40. Rd5?! Rxd5

White is winning easily, of course. Normally you want to exchange pieces while ahead in pawns. In this position, white has had to make a concession to trade rooks by splitting the queenside pawns. It is probably easier to win the position with connected passed pawns with the rooks on.

41. cxd5 Ke 8 42. Kc4 Kd7 43. Nb6 Kc744. Kc5 Bd3

Here is the position that makes this game a swindle. Being a full pawn down without any compensation, it remains only a question of whether black can swindle a draw or not. Surely a win is out of the question...

45. Nc4?! Bf1

White is still winning, but 45. d6 Kd8 totally locks the black king out of the game.

46. Ne3 Be2 47. d6 Kd7 48. b4 h549. b5 h4

When you are desperate in an ending like this, there isn't much to lose in advancing your pawns. Sometimes miracles happen as pawns get closer to the back rank.

50. Nf5 g5 51. b6 Ba6?

Missing a great swindle chance! The computer finds 51. ... h3! where 52. b7 hxg2 53. b8 (Q) loses to 53. ... g1(Q)+ and white's queen goes lost after 54. Kd5 Qd1+ 55. Kc5 Qc2+. White's best appears to be 52. gxh3 Bxf3 53. h4 keeping a pawn advantage.

52. Nh6 Bb7 53. Ng4 Ke6 54. h3 e4! 55. fxe4 Bxe4 56. Ne3 ...

A false path is 56. b7?! Bxb7 57. Kb6 Kxd6 58. Bxb7 f5 59. Ne3 Ke5 60. Kc7 Kf4 61. Nf1 g4 62. Kd6 gxh3 63. gxh3 Kf3 64. Ke5 Kg2 with a draw.

56. ... Bb7 57. Nd5 f5!

Of course not 57. ... Bxd5 58. d7 Kxd7 59. Kxd5 with an easy win for white.

58. Ne3 f4 59. Nd5 Bxd5 60. d7 Kxd7 61. Kxd5 g4! 62. Ke4 f3! 63. Ke3 fxg2 64. Kf2 gxh365. Resigns

0 - 1

Not sure what the specific losing move was for white. Looks like a chess miracle!

White NM B Melvin Black S Varagona Notes by Melvin

1. e4 c6
2. d4 d5
3. e5 Na6!?

The excellent "Beating the Caro-Kann" by Vassilios Kotronias doesn't even list this move. Seirawan's ECO Monograph mentions it in a footnote: 3. ... Na6 4. c3 Nc7 5. Bd3 g6 6. Nd2 [6. Nf3!?] h5 7. Nf1 [7. Ndf3!?] Nh6 8. Ne3 Ng4 9. Nf3 Ne3 10. fe3 = van der Wiel - Kavalek, Wijk aan Zee 1982; 10. Be3 with a slight edge to white according to Seirawan.

Analysis like the above isn't totally convincing. Black's unorthodox knight move doesn't have a direct refutation. I have had the move played against me before and knew that 4. Bxa6 Qa5+ didn't do anything for white. I hoped that the knight would be awkward on c7 and white's space advantage would tell. The move is definitely playable.

4. c3 Nc7
5. Bd3 g6
6. Be3 ...

My idea isn't bad, but is drastically different from the Seirawan line. I planned to use the bishop against black's kingside. I hoped that black's position would become awkward with h6 under white's control.

6. ... Bg7
7. Qd2 f6

This pawn break surprised me at the time. I thought it would be dangerous for to open the center so early.

8. exf6 exf6
9. Ne2 Ne7

Black has equalized whether I like it or not! During the game, I certainly felt like I must have an advantage somewhere.

10. Ng3 Be6
11. Bh6 Kf7
12. O-O Qd7
13. Bxg7 Kxg7
14. Qc2 Ne8

The fight is over the f5 square. That explains my 14. Qc2 and the black knight going for d6. I was now starting to understand that I hadn't gotten anything out the opening. Black can get more pieces to control f5 than white. I felt my only chance to play for a win was to complicate things on the e-file.

15. Nd2 Nd6
16. Rae1 h5
17. Ne2 Nef5
18. Nf4 Bf7
19. Re2 Rae8
20. Rfe1 Rxe2
21. Rxe2 g5

This move surprised and confused me. I presumed that I was headed for an endgame with the superior position and black would have to defend a slightly worse position. Even the computer likes white by almost half a pawn here. Black's is justified and he gets enough counterplay to hold the balance.

22. Nh3 Nh4
23. f3 Re8
24. Nf2 Rxe2
25. Bxe2 Qe7
26. Nf1 Bg6
27. Qd2 Nhf5
28. Bd3 Nh4
29. Qe3?! ...

The computer lowers the evaluation of white's position over half a pawn on this move. Yet, 29. Be2 all but offered a draw by repetition which I could not afford due to my tournament standing (Scott was ½ point ahead of me) and 29. Bxg6 just seemed to get the h4 knight back into the game.

29. ... Qxe3
30. Nxe3 f5!

Moves like this keep me up at night! On general principle, one should not put pawns on the same color squares as their bishop in endings. This move voluntarily does just that. Yet, the point is that the pawn is going to f4 which will give black a strong position on the kingside. Black now has an edge.

31. Be2 f4
32. Nf1 Nf5
33. b3?! ...

Not convincing. Didn't I just state the principle for bishops in these endings? True, it keeps the black knight off c4, but it is better to just exchange the for the knight than weaken the queenside structure.

33. ... b6
34. a4 a5
35. Nd3 b5!
36. Ne5? ...

Now I'm totally lost. I had to play something like 36. Kf2 and try to defend.

36. ... b4!
37. Nxc6 bxc3
38. Bd1 Ne3
39. Nxe3 fxe3
40. Kf1 c2
41. Bxc2 Bxc2
42. Nxa5 Nf5
43. Nc6 Bxb3
44. a5 Bc4+
45. Ke1 Nh4
46. Resigns

0 - 1

A superbly played game from start to finish by Scott Varagona. After a quick draw in the last round, Scott became the 2002 Vulcan Open Champion.

Horst Ruppert (1606) Bill Melvin (2200)
2002 Battle Above the Clouds (Chattanooga)

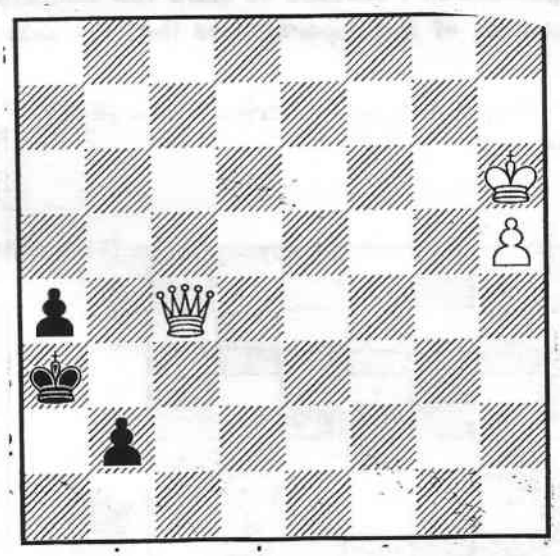
Botvinnik once called Stalemate the seed of salvation. in this article, one of Alabamas most resourceful players, Ozgur Aktunc, provides us with the wondeful fruit that his seeds bore. Editor

Importance of Endgame and Stalemate Combinations

Endgame is without doubt the phase of the game that players decide the fate of the game. The one with more knowledge have definitely more weapons to use in this phase. Between equal strength players, generally games finish more frequently in the endgame. Also, as the player gets stronger, the frequency of playing endgames increases. Sometimes the inexperienced players tire quickly because of the dry analytical nature of the endgame. However, once the chess player starts to understand the basics of the endgames and begins to "have a feel" about it, the ideas will change quickly.

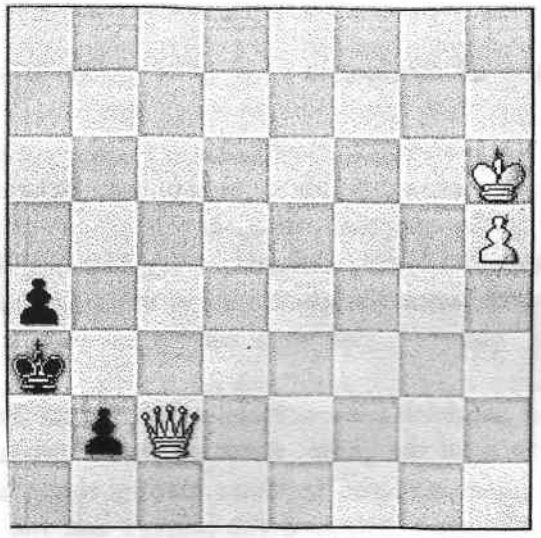
The experienced endgame player is like a magician with several spells to cast in hard positions. Even in inferior positions, he would have faith to save the game. Some of these "spells," actually bright chess moves, are the ones that create the stalemate combinations. In chess history there have been thousands of stalemate combinations that have fascinated the players and the audience. I'm lucky to have created some interesting stalemate combinations both in my tournament practice and in many quick games. I would like to share two of these games that I played in Alabama:

Vulcan Open 2001: Gerald Larson (2106) - Ozgur Aktunc (2030) {C9}



In this position white can win with a hard to find variation:
50. Qc3+ Ka2 51. Qc2 a3 (51...Ka3 52. Qb1 Kb3 53. Kg5 a3 54. h6 a2 55. Qd3 +Kb4 56. h7 Ka2 57. Qa5+ Kb3 58. Qd5+ Kc2 59. Qc4+ Kd2 60. Qd4+ Kc2 61. h8Q Qc1+ 62. Kg4+-}, but white plays Qc2.

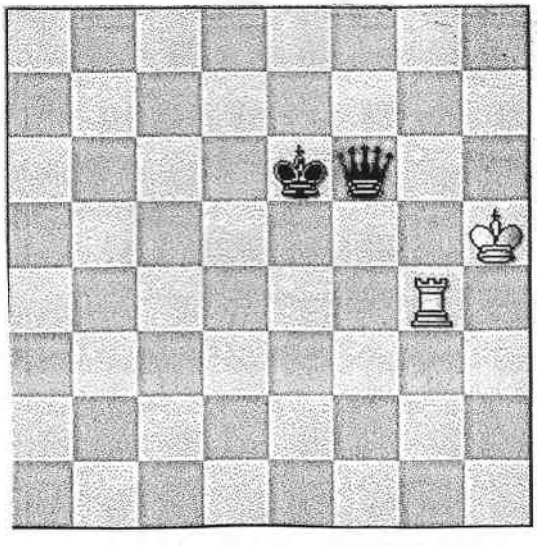
Find the stalemate combination



50... b1Q! 51. Qxb1 There is no better alternative 1/2-1/2

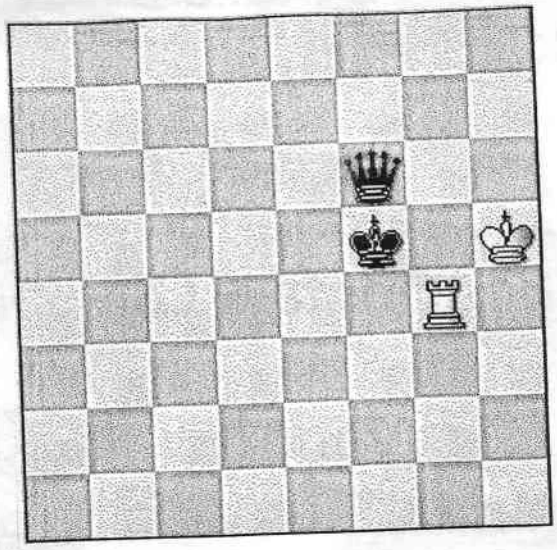
Another one from a queen vs. rook ending. Despite the material advantage, this endgame is quite hard to win. Computers play this type of endgame perfectly because of their tablebases that give the exact solutions to them. It should be noted that Kasparov and Karpov couldn't succeed to mate the computer with the queen vs. computers rook in their first attempts. Here is an example of the opportunities that the side with the rook has:

2001 Alabama State Championship: *Ozgur Aktunc - Charles Smith [B01]*



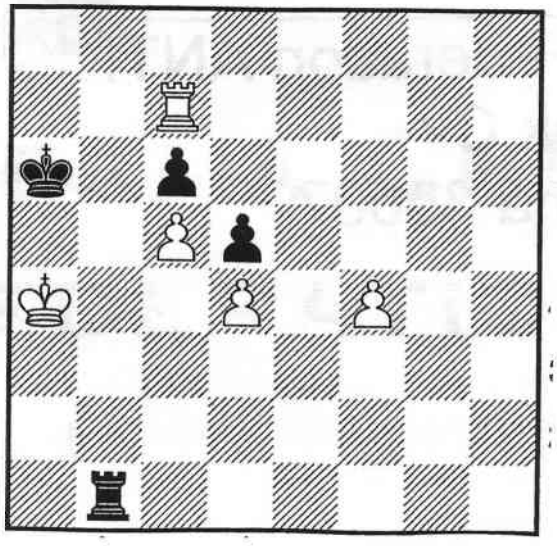
Black can win this position in 19 moves, but the path to win is not easy to find if white plays correctly: [94...Qh8+ 95. Kg5 Ke5 96. Kg6 Qg8+ 97. Kh5 Qh7+ 98. Kg5 Qh3 99. Rb4 Qe3+ 100. Kg4 Qe2+ 101. Kh3 Kf5 102. Rb3 Kf4 103. Rb4+ Kg5 104. Ra4 Qd3+ 105. Kg2 Qc2++-] Black falls into a stalemate combination by playing Kf5.

Find the stalemate combination



95. Rf4+! (Either black king takes the rook and stalemate or it's a draw after capturing the queen.) 1/2-1/2

For your Pleasure (From Botvinnik on the Endgame)



Black to move and draw

CALENDAR

JAN 18-19 Richard Bellezza Memorial Class Championship Details elsewhere in this issue Contact Kirk Petty

FEB 22-23 Queen of Hearts Montgomery Details in this issue Contact Caesar Lawrence

Its time to think about your city Hosting the number One Alabama Tournament -- The State Championship!!!!!! Try to have your proposals in by April 1 Need Assistance ask President Melvin Vice President Lawrence or Kirk Petty

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Alabama Chess Federation ANTICS

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